

California Drought

Executive Order B-29-15, Directive #3, April 1, 2015

Turf Replacement Initiative

Program Goals

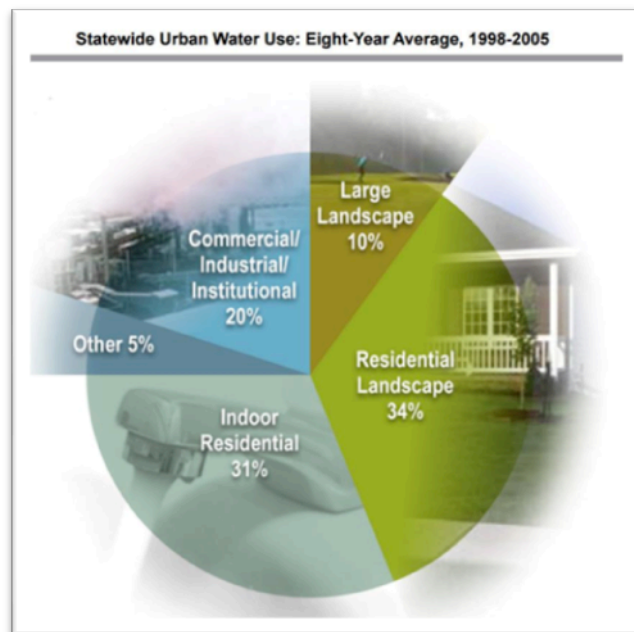
The Governor's Executive Order B-29-15 directs the California Department of Water Resources (Department) to "lead a statewide initiative, in partnership with local agencies, to collectively replace 50 million square feet of lawns and ornamental turf with drought tolerant landscapes. The Department shall provide funding to allow for lawn replacement programs in underserved communities, which will complement local programs already underway across the state."

In responding to the Executive Order, the Department will establish a program with two *primary goals*:

- *Water savings*: Both short term, as homeowners cut back or stop lawn irrigation this summer, and long term as turf is replaced with low water use landscapes
- *Environmental benefits*: Low-water-use landscapes provide multiple environmental benefits including reduced run-off, improved water quality, and reduction in the energy requirements and greenhouse gas emissions associated with landscape maintenance and water production and treatment.

Background

Statewide, residential and large landscape irrigation accounts for approximately 45 percent of urban water demand. Because lawns represent a significant portion of our urban landscape and water waste is common — water running down street gutters, leaks, broken sprinklers, watering during rainstorms, etc. - lawn removal and conversion to water-efficient landscapes could significantly contribute to the overall reduction of water demand in the urban sector.



Water Plan Update, 2013.

Potential water savings attributable to turf replacement vary depending on climate, variability in landscape, irrigation replacement options, and human behavior. Studies across California show

average turf-replacement water savings vary from 18 percent to 83 percent. The volume of water saved ranges from 13 to 70 or more gallons per square foot, per year. Southern California water agencies consistently report savings of approximately 45 gallons per square foot, per year. (CUWCC 2015 report: “Turf Removal & Replacement - Lessons Learned”).

Program Design

The Department has budgeted \$10 million to help finance the turf replacement initiative in the Governor’s Executive Order. The program will include two components:

- *Rebates and Direct Install Program.* The Department will support turf removal and lawn conversion efforts implemented through customer rebates or direct installs for specified underserved, severely impacted drought-stricken communities in the San Joaquin Valley.
- *Statewide Campaign to Promote Low-Water-Use Landscapes.* The Department will lead a statewide campaign, in partnership with regional and local water agencies, to promote the conversion of lawns and other turf to low-water-use landscapes.

Lawn Conversion Rebates and Direct-Install Program

With a focus on underserved communities that have been hit hard by drought, The Department proposes to implement the Turf Replacement Initiative through a targeted and monitored rebate program and, in some locations, a direct-install program. Both options would have minimum planting and retrofit requirements. Approximately \$10 million will support the conversion of 5 million square feet of turf at roughly 5,000 homes, achieving 10 percent of the statewide goal of 50 million square feet.

Statewide Campaign to Promote Low-Water-Use Landscapes

The Department will lead a statewide campaign, in partnership with *Save Our Water*, other State, regional, and local agencies, as well as non-profit and other entities to promote low-water-use landscapes and the conversion of turf landscapes across the State. Specific activities will include; outreach, community engagement, and technical and financial support for public participation in landscape conversion events. The campaign will also track the total square feet of turf removal across the State and encourage local agencies to join the effort. It will seek pledges by local agencies and municipalities to meet the statewide goal.

Timeline

The Department expects to have funding available July 1, 2015 in order to get the Turf Replacement Initiative under full implementation this summer.

For more information, or to be informed of updates, please go to www.water.ca.gov.